

# CALIFORNIA GRASSFED BISON®

## Bringing them Home



Lindner Bison breeding bull, 803 Jr.

**BISON, ancient symbol of Abundance & Prosperity**  
- today's symbol of HOPE & RENEWAL.

### ***A new year, a new effort, a new spirit***

As welcome as this new year is, the holiday found us apart for the first time in 16 years. While Kathy stayed behind to leverage our time and maximize every sales dollar, Ken was at the ranch doing things to streamline our operation of 2 people. (Well, ok, we do have one part time helper who we've come to rely on. Then we learned she would be gone 6 weeks and scrambled. Gratefully we found a backup person and began a crash course for how we do things!)

So the beginning of this new year is already hinting at new opportunities and a renewed vision.

For awhile, when we were our most tired, it seems we heard of yet more housing foreclosures, more job layoffs. A turning point happened when one of our younger customers told us he

had lost his job on Friday. Two weeks later, he matter-of-factly and even happily reported he had taken a few jobs -- one was delivering sandwiches. (This is in contrast to traveling to exotic places for & with his previous employer and worrying about finding a dog sitter.) For us, it broke the spell of what we now call the 'gloom & doom sayers.'

Sooner or later, one by one, we all reveal what we are made of -- and quite honestly, most of us never know until we need to make choices we've never had to make before.

Our parents and grandparents, who experienced the Great Depression called it "pulling yourself up by your [own] bootstraps." This means that no matter how long I wait for someone else to fix something I have an issue with, usually nothing happens until I finally and personally take positive action. This also means I may need to step out of my comfort zone and do something different.

Chances are if you're reading this, like us, you are a descendent of pioneers who wanted a new and better life. They wanted it enough to do something different. If you're not a descendent, you may live here because of the new and better life these pioneers created. This approach, this mindset, is the stuff we Americans are truly made of.

Through the hard-won lessons of our ancestors, we know that eventually persons of good faith, with hard work and perseverance, will prevail. Because it has been done before, it will be done again.

This we decided is the opening theme for our new year. Together, by pitching in, we can all do better, be better, have better and leave better.

We're glad to join with you in moving forward on a new path, with a renewed spirit and a steadfast determination.

Sincerely, Kathy & Ken

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### **THE RECONNECT FACTOR**

FOR US, FOR THE ANIMALS & FOR THE EARTH

**- for us**

***"Are you doing ok?"***

This is the question we hear from so many of you now, starting well before Christmas. This is the question we ask right back to you, our customers, our friends and neighbors.

This caring is at the heart of the new reconnect between people and their heritage food source. Right now, though, it's just between people.



Kathy & Ken Lindner and our farmers market customers. Caring is at the heart of the reconnect between people.

More of you stay a little longer at our booth and visit with each other; you take the time to say hello to each other, swap cooking tips or talk about the weather. It's an unmistakable spirit of kindness which often emerges through a new awareness and shared sense of vulnerability. This is reminiscent of what Kathy personally observed and heard on a deeper level among New Yorkers after 9/11.

Because Lindner Bison is a small heritage meat producer, and because after 6 years, there is an ongoing support and connection between us, it is this very sense of vulnerability and caring which provides a foundation to build on.

Right now, so far, Lindner Bison is cautiously and gratefully doing ok. Understandably, the answer from you is mixed. Some of you have lost your jobs, others have taken new jobs. Many of you still have your jobs, while others are moving in with family or friends. All of us are watching and waiting to see what the first quarter brings.

As many of you know, Kathy personally decided to watch less news on TV. For weeks she watched no news at all, while Ken was highly selective. Though we rarely have time to watch anything, we've learned that as well meaning as the media may be, most round-the-clock news stations contains commentary based on opinions and speculation. And on a slow news day, there is plenty of opinion and speculation!

So what Lindner Bison now chooses to do is seek reasonable facts without the drama. This includes NPR (National Public Radio) as a tool for a reasonable source of current events. We change the TV channel if it contains a news-debate format. We already know what we think.

For caring people, there is no shortage of things to care about. From a purely practical standpoint, then, it's not

the caring that's the issue, it's knowing when and how to care. It's knowing when and how to use our energy in a positive way.

For us, the choice is easy. We choose to put our energy into our business. This means you, since without you we would have no business. We care about our animals, without which we would have no business. And we care about our ranch operation, which sustains the animals in an earth friendly way.

Though it's not an easy path for two people who knew little manual labor in our 'previous life', we can't imagine doing anything else today. Nothing would give us the sense of satisfaction, meaning, connection and belonging that this path has given us.

We are grateful for the connection with you and for your continued support in buying our meat. We are grateful that you care about the interrelated aspects of our sustainable operation, restoring a California native-heritage animal, as well as for the two of us personally.

Because of this shared sense of caring, connection and commitment to all three elements (us, the animals & the earth), with each passing season of each passing year, our reconnect fabric is woven tighter and stronger than ever before.

It starts when we care. It starts with us.

## - for the animals

### *"Standing into the Storm"*

Each winter, we are reminded how much Bison love the cold! Dating back to the Ice Age, one look at them will tell you how well they are naturally designed to withstand subzero temperatures.

Because bison stand into a storm, rather than turning away from it, they survive when other livestock perish.



Well-insulated, bison with unmelted snow on back.



The heavy, full chaps on their legs, the massive winter hair on their head, hump and chest are part of how well they are protected from cold weather. The rest of their body is covered with an undercoat of soft down. They are so well insulated that you may often see photos like the one above with snow and ice crystals formed on the outside of their hide, yet the snow won't melt, because the body heat is so well contained and protected by this down.

"Standing into the Storm" is another bison gift and much beloved theme for those who know of it. This trait is our best and most immediate heritage example of how to deal with our personal and shared winter storms.

When we are able to capture this theme with our camera, you can be sure we are happy to share this symbol of strength and endurance with you!

## BISON STORIES

*This is just one of many stories we look forward to sharing with you. One by one, they light the way home.*

### **Ken's New Year's Eve Gift**

When we decided we needed to leverage our time by Ken going to the ranch and Kathy staying behind, we knew it was a decision that was necessary, but not one that we welcomed. After being together for 16 years, it would mark the first time we would be apart on a major holiday. It also meant Ken would be driving on New Year's Day, something we prefer to avoid.

There was no other way. We were both sad about it. We were tired and we wanted to be together.

Instead, we decided to focus on what needed to be done. Come spring, weather permitting, our hope is to plant rye grass in a non-irrigated area and fence it off. Provided we get decent rain, this will help choke out weeds and provide added forage.

Ken drove all day Monday and went to bed early.

By the end of the next day, Tuesday, December 30, he had constructed a rough "tumbleweed plow" out of old pieces of plywood and mounted on the front of our Ranger. This unproven concept had the potential to provide a huge labor and monetary relief to our meager resources, so the plow represented a critical first step to planting.

Finally he was ready to take it out for a test run.



Tumbleweed plow design by Ken Lindner

As he was working the fence line where the tumbleweed was piled the highest, he soon found he had an audience. The animals, always curious about everything we do, gathered around and watched. As he pushed away tumbleweed from one section, they crowded in to check out what had been changed in their home. This went on for several hours, as he pushed the tumbleweeds into piles for burning.

Toward dusk, flaws in the plow design became apparent. It started to break apart, forcing him to stop. Now dark, he made his way back to the bunkhouse. That night we talked by phone briefly. Ken was exhausted and went to bed early, knowing there was only one day left before he had to leave.

On Wednesday, December 31st we kept in touch by cell phone as he finished working on the plow. Emotionally, we were both struggling. Then it was time for Ken to take the redesigned ATV plow out for a test run. He was alone and tired. Kathy was 600 miles away. Our part time helper had a doctor's appointment that day and was not available to help.

He began plowing tumbleweed. The design held. As before, the animals watched as he plowed the tumbleweed away from the fence into pile. This time though, they kept their distance, which allowed him to work more quickly.

Soon 14 large piles of tumbleweed were in place. It was enough. He decided to start the burning process. The sun would be gone in a few hours and he knew he would have to leave early the next morning.

Working his way down the fence line, Ken burned pile after pile of tumbleweed.



Plowing & burning tumbleweeds is the first step to seeding our non-irrigated pasture land at Heritage Ranch

By early evening, he finally reached the last pile. Just as he ignited it and it started to burn, something caught the corner of his eye. He turned.

A small group of about 20 of the younger animals had started to run and jump in their boinging fashion (aka, 'the dance'). They ran around in a large circle just in front of where he was working. Uplifted, he watched as they continued to run and play, running up to each other, inviting the next one who would then join in and follow.

Ken mused it was because they were happy to see the tumbleweeds disappear too. Instead of the dance lasting their standard 15-30 seconds though, the group dance just got larger as more animals joined the fun. (Bison are gregarious by nature and when they feel good, they seem to look for any excuse to run. On achieving momentum, they do a stiff-legged boing, boing boing. It is a joyful thing and a privilege to behold. We call it the bison 'dance'.) Ken soon found himself busy watching them and tending to the fire.

Quite unexpectedly, the entire herd, now about 100 animals, joined the circle of youngsters. While Ken watched in wonder, the entire herd took off at a dead run in the lower pasture, forming a circle of about 1/4 mile wide.

His wonder quickly changed. After completing a 360 degree circle, the circle was opening and he realized they were now headed toward him at a dead run. Not one member of the herd was standing - all were running directly toward him, including our normally more reserved 16 year old females. (He will tell you that when you suddenly find an entire herd of bison charging toward you at top speed, it is time to head for cover.) Ken moved to the other side of ATV and waited.

At about 50 feet away from him, at the last second, the herd suddenly veered off back toward the lower pasture

again. They ran another full circle away and back, alternating running and boinging as they went.

Incredibly, they repeated this performance 3 times. Each time they ran straight toward him, each time they veered off at the last second. This continued for 3-4 minutes, the longest dance either of us has ever seen.

The last time they went around, some of the younger animals, who had been at it from the beginning, now went by with their tongues hanging out, panting like crazy, but unwilling to stop. Clearly, they were having a blast! Finally, reason prevailed and they all headed to the stock tank for water. Almost as quickly as it started, it was over.

Ken knew he had received perhaps the highest compliment and honor a bison rancher can receive: an invitation to run with the herd. He blessed them and thanked them. Slowly he drove back to get ready to leave. Then he called Kathy to share with her, the unexpected New Years Eve gift he had been given.

We agreed it was going to be a good new year.

We also resolved to keep the camera safely in the Ranger to record spontaneous bison moments like this! Until then, please visit a short video at our url below to get an idea. Scroll to the bottom of the page and select 'Bison Dance.' <http://www.lindnerbison.com/ranchtour-summer.html>

## - for the earth

### FROM THE RANCH

There is always plenty going on at the ranch year round, and winter is no exception. Each year we think there may be a little less to do. Each year we find there just isn't!

#### New irrigation pump update.

The new pump arrived mid-October. Installation was delayed until the inside of the entire casing could be viewed using an underwater camera to insure that no damage had been done to the irrigation casing.



New irrigation pump delivered, waiting for installation



By the end of October this underwater viewing was done and to our relief, the casing was declared free of holes or rusted out sections.

In the process, important positive new statistics were learned.

For example, we now know the well is an incredible 500 feet deep. The level of "first water" is 40 feet down and the pump itself is set at 255 feet. This means that the pump is located about mid way in a column of water 500 feet deep.

This helps to explain why we can pump up to 1500 gpm (gallons per minute) with "only" a 100 hp electric motor. It also means we have a deeper safety zone should the water table ever drop.



A drilling rig was brought in to hoist the heavy, new pump into place.

By mid-November, the new pump was in, tested and running smooth and quiet. The unused booster pump was also tested and runs fine.

The pump installer believes the main pump had been gradually failing for years and finally completely failed this year. Now that the new pump is in and running, we are ready for this spring's pumping.



The new pump is carefully guided & secured into place.

#### Purchase of additional winter hay

With our irrigation pump failing in mid-September, the last hay cutting was far less than it should have been. So in addition to pump replacement costs, we also needed to find and buy hay produced without chemicals to make up for the shortfall. With the help of our neighbor, Chris, this was located and delivered in January.



Additional winter hay arrives to make up for the shortfall due to the irrigation pump failure.

We are grateful that the old pump continued working through the main part of the growing season or our hay shortage would have been more severe.





Kat confirms the good quality of the newly delivered hay.

#### Preparing for winter.

Each fall, we “winterize” our 1/4 mile long irrigation wheel lines. This is a standard activity consisting of the following: move the lines to their winter storage location, drain or stabilize fuel for each mover motor; put a few tablespoons of engine oil into each motor’s cylinder and crank to prevent lock-up; cover the open end of each line to keep critters and debris out; and stake down every third wheel to prevent winter winds from moving and destroying them; remove and store the mover chains.

Over the years, these motor chains have become caked with minerals, making them nearly impossible to take on and off. This year we soaked them in a calcium remover solution. They now look like new and are gently resting in an oil/diesel fuel mixture waiting for spring.

#### Preparing for spring.

In spite of irrigation and perhaps especially because of irrigation pumping costs, we take kindly to gifts of rain and snow, which helps extend the grass growing season for our grassfed bison. With two years of drought conditions, and now hearing predictions of a third drought year, our pastures are understandably being challenged.

We are on the alert. Any new winter forecast which now includes rain or snow, means an opportunity for us to continue our major efforts to seed and/or overseed

pasture sections. If adequate winter snow or rains come, rather than spend time and money seeding non-irrigated land which won’t produce, we will wait.

In the meantime, preparation for the next major spring seedings have begun:

1. Non-irrigated pasture land. For two years, our efforts to establish rye grass on non-irrigated pasture have been unsuccessful due to lack of natural moisture. Lack of grass to crowd out weeds has resulted in a tumbleweed “bumper crop” at our place. (As you may know, tumbleweeds propagate by breaking off in the high winds of fall and winter, and roll along, spreading their seed far and wide. Because of the prevailing winds on our place, most of them end up piled against our eastern most fences, sometimes to a full 6 feet high.

This year, we vowed revenge.

Ken designed a “tumbleweed plow” blade made of old, unusable plywood and mounted to the front of our Ranger ATV. This plow pushes the mass of tumbleweed away from the fences and into large piles for burning.



Tumbleweed plow pushing tumbleweed away from fence.

Though a great labor and time saving device, it’s hard work for both plow and the Ranger. Already several plywood pieces have been sacrificed to the cause, breaking apart after hard use, forcing us to stop and replace them with more old plywood pieces. But the job is getting done.

In order to seed grass, which will help reduce these icky tumbleweeds, they must be removed. The only way to remove them is to gather them into piles and burn them.

During cold, wet, winter months, you’ll often find farmers and ranchers doing this labor-intensive weed burning. Easier when you live on site, since you can do a little each day based on wind and weather conditions.

For the first time in two months, Kathy joined Ken at the ranch late January. Working together, we cleared ¼ mile of tumbleweed, with another ¼ mile to go before spring!



Kathy burning tumbleweeds at Heritage Ranch.

Once we seed the area, our bison are drafted to help. By putting out the winter hay here, as they feed, their hooves will push the seed into the earth, securing it. Bison's hooves, being split and pointed do a great sustainable reseeding job, instead of using heavy ag equipment to drill seed into the soil.

2. Irrigated pasture land. With gregarious herbivores running around and a premature loss of water due to a failing pump, plus two years of drought conditions, our pastures are looking tired. This spring we will fence off about 1/3 of the area in each pasture with temporary electric fencing. We will overseed these areas and allow them to grow, un-grazed, for the entire growing season. In each of the two succeeding years, the other 1/3 sections will be fenced off in a similar fashion. After three years, this effort should reward us with greatly improved pastures.

This plan also requires we maintain a sustainable level of grassfed bison per grass acre. Your continuing consumption of our meat products is an important part of our pasture regeneration plans!

3. Irrigated hay pasture. Each year, we've been improving the hay yield by overseeding with a mix of grass and clover. We're not sure if we can stretch our water much further without an additional wheel line. Or if an additional wheel line will compromise the water pressure needed without using the booster pump.

These activities and events help explain why we decided we to leverage our time and divide our efforts. Also, one of the reasons this newsletter is late. We've been

working especially hard with no time left over. Finally, the new pump is paid for, the hay is paid for, and we start again to save money for seed and ranch payments which come due twice a year.

With a weakened economy, as always and more than ever before, we are grateful for your ongoing support.

We don't think our appreciation can be overstated. It is this support which helps us bring our clean, 100% grassfed bison meat to you and help return a heritage animal back into the state in a humane, sustainable way.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

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## FOR THE RECORD

*Items you may find interesting.*

### Great reading!

[River Cottage Meat Book](#) by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall  
For carnivores with a conscience.

Save your pennies for this incredible 2007 UK published book. In hardcover only, we bought the *US version* online for about \$26 with our Christmas gift money. It includes all species, as well as incredible recipes by the chef/author.

His approach: to use the whole animal and honor it's life. In many instances, he raises what he humanely harvests and cooks.

The recipes look amazing and the one we've tried is just that. This goes further though. Easy reading, it crafts a reconnect and educational tool for caring meat producers and consumers. We believe this book may help raise awareness and set a new standard for both. You'll see what we mean.

Here's just one of many reviews available online:

'[http://andreyaya.typepad.com/rookie\\_cookery/2008/08/the-river-cotta.html](http://andreyaya.typepad.com/rookie_cookery/2008/08/the-river-cotta.html)

[Eating is a Political Act](#), Nov 2008 Michael Pollan interview  
'<http://www.progressive.org/mag/intv1108>

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## WHAT'S IN A WORD?

*A lay-person's guide to shopping for meat.*

For years we have heard these questions from you. The answers may continue to change as labeling laws and meat suppliers respond to new standards demanded by informed consumers. Unfortunately, what we buy may not always be what we think regarding selection, nutrition and husbandry or production methods.

As always, ask until you are satisfied. These days, it takes an enlightened consumer to navigate these waters and to authentically reconnect with their food source.

We hope you agree it is worth the effort - for us, for the animals, and for the earth!



## What's in a word?

TERM OR CLAIM	CONSUMER THINKS	REALITY
100% grassfed	100% grassfed	100% grassfed (See American Grassfed Assoc. definition disallowing grain, corn, etc.)
100% pastured	100% grassfed	All ruminants are basically pastured. <u>It's what's in the pasture that counts.</u> May include mobile feeding tubs of grain, corn or other 'feed.'
100% pasture fed	100% grassfed	Ditto. See above.
100% vegetarian fed	100% grassfed	See above. Grain & corn may be part of a vegetarian diet, though unnatural for a ruminant.
bison	buffalo, venison, bison	<i>Bison bison</i> is the species name. Consumers don't have to wonder what they're getting, but may want to ask if the bison are 100% grassfed.
buffalo (the animal)	American buffalo	May be water buffalo, cape buffalo or American buffalo
buffalo (the meat or menu item)	American buffalo	See above. Food labeling is so loose in this country. In ground meat, it's perfectly legal to add up to 49% beef, still call it 'buffalo,' with no legal obligation to tell you. And it is being done.
beef	meat	An early beef industry advertising strategy which worked; many use the term 'beef' interchangeably with the word 'meat'.
feed yard	grass (yard)	fenced area includes 'feed' (usually grain, corn, etc.)
grassfed	100% grassfed	All ruminants are basically grassfed. See 100% grassfed above.
grass-finished	100% grassfed	Some producers may have them on grass, then put them on grain to bulk them up, then back on grass so this claim can be made.
organic	no chemicals or drugs, 100% grassfed	You can feed a ruminant the best organic grain or corn in the world & it still isn't their natural diet of 100% grass.
ranch/farm raised	100% grassfed	Implies no feedlot. This may not be true. All ruminants are basically raised on a farm or ranch of some kind.
sustainable	recycling menus, food bags, abandoning plastic, styrofoam, buying local, supporting 'green', environmentally friendly practices in general. All of this is a good start.	Enlightened sustainability includes ethical meat consumption choices. For example, choosing prime steaks is less sustainable since they represent 15% of a carcass. Sustainable consumption choices are often more economical & may play an important role in helping to restore a native-heritage species. You get the idea!

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www.lindnerbison.com

\* \* \* **HELP WANTED** \* \* \*

### Short term Personnel Contractor *Personnel experience required*

We need your help.

Over the last few years, we have tried to find suitable help in taking over one or more of our farmer's markets. Being inexperienced in personnel matters, after weeks of extensive time and effort advertising, screening and interviewing in between trips to the ranch and selling meat, we failed to find a suitable candidate. Increasingly, we need help since demands at the ranch continue to place pressures on our already limited time.

We thought we'd try something different. First, we are canvassing those of you with personnel experience who may be interested in short term contract work. If this isn't you, perhaps you know of someone with personnel experience who may be interested. If so, please have them fax or email their resume to us at their earliest convenience.

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*Personnel contract position: Applicant processing & screening. This short term contract position will find and screen farmer's market applicants for interviewing by Lindner Bison. The successful candidate will have suitable Personnel experience with preference given to those with backgrounds in meat, healthfood and/or sales.*

*This independent contractor position pays in dollars or barter. \$300 - OR - 40 lbs. of our assorted meat valued at about \$395. Barter includes 8 lbs. steaks, 12 lbs. roasts and 20 lbs. other: (burger, patties, stew, kabob, fajitas). A deposit may be provided as needed. Payment in full on the successful placement of a qualified candidate.*

Fax to: 661-254-0224. Email: [klindner@lindnerbison.com](mailto:klindner@lindnerbison.com)

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#### SPECIAL NOTE:

Please respect that as much as we wish we could, we simply have no time to discuss details without first receiving a faxed or emailed resume. The goal of the successful personnel contractor is to help us leverage our time and present only qualified applicants based on the position requirements which will be provided by Lindner Bison.



BY THE WAY . . .

NEW ITEMS!

Flat iron steaks and mock tenderloin.

Some of you have asked about these, so they are now available on a limited basis. Let us know and we're glad to put them aside for you while we figure out how to cook them! \$tbd

Heritage Ranch California Grassfed Bison Calendar '09



New 2009 Heritage Ranch photo calendar introduced.

These were created for holiday gifts and also sold. As always, Ken takes all of the great photos, and because we are so enjoying ours so much, we wanted to let you know in case you'd like one. \$10+ tax

Bison silver pendant – Ancient symbol of Abundance & Prosperity/Protector of Women.



Years ago, Kathy found this simple bison pendant on a trip to Montana to visit her dad.. Though many of you wanted one, the mold had been discontinued. Finally, through one of our beloved customers, we found a jewelry maker right here in LA. He lovingly recreated the mold for us and Lindner Bison is now happy to offer these very simple, elegant silver bison pendants on a 22" silver chain. \$69.50+ tax

Other sustainable items.

In our ongoing sustainability effort, Lindner Bison's default position is to always, when ever possible, provide products which represent our commitment and yours to the premise of using every part of the animal so that nothing is wasted.

With bison, as we have learned from Native Americans, there are almost too many products to name.

Each year we inch closer to identifying and capturing these essential, practical and sometimes spiritual items.

Perhaps our single, greatest shared limitation is our industrialized conditioning over the past 40 or 50 years. Fueled by a new sense of awareness and dedication to living in a more accountable, responsible manner, the adjustment in abandoning old ways may sometimes seem arduous. Along with you, we strive to create a new path which compliments our new purpose.

Certain items may be available on a limited basis, depending on requests, timing and our limited resources.

Hides. For years now, Lindner Bison has unsuccessfully searched for an earth friendly tannery in the US. Many tanneries which used chromium in their process have been (rightfully) closed due to environmental impact issues. Winter robes may be available by preorder only; hides are saved in faith that we will find a local vegetable oil tanner for leather. Bison leather is more durable, becoming softer and softer with use. \$Call

Hair. Collected from the ground & brushes in the spring and sought after by spinners, hair is stored, waiting to be shipped to a fiber shop for cleaning. It takes quite a bit of washed and sorted hair to create one ounce of yarn. Bison hair may be softer and warmer than cashmere; garments may be machine washed, becoming even softer with each wash. \$Call

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*"It is in honoring the gifts of each animal that we create our enlightened sustainable path. And when every part is used, fewer harvests are necessary." Kathy & Ken Lindner*

Kathy & Ken write the contents of the newsletter, then we edit each other's work, which may help explain jumping back and forth on the pronouns. As you can see, we are not professionals. This is offered as a vehicle to strengthen the reconnect with us, the animals & the earth in a sustainable & caring non-industrial fashion. Ken is LB's gifted photographer, without any formal training.

